

The Table That Will Link Harding's Inauguration With Lincoln's

By AARON HARDY ULM

IT IS a little and daintily designed piece of parlor furniture, of solid mahogany. It is one of the kinds of home interior fittings that relieved the drab of the horsehair upholstering days of the Civil War period and later. It has done duty in the home of a prominent Washington family for more than fifty years, with an additional pleasing service to every beginner-President since Abraham Lincoln, excepting one. And it will again come forth to rest the inaugural arm and hand of President Harding, to uphold the Bible that will seal the Presidential oath and support the address that will announce national policies for the next four years. It began to do those things for the Great Emancipator and if good luck continues, the table will render like services for many future Presidents.

The article of furniture isn't public property and as far as known it has always been privately owned. Its continued existence in a state of excellent preservation is due to the thoughtfulness of a young architect who made the arrangements for Lincoln's inauguration in 1861. The architect was Edward Clark, who for a half century was attached to the National Capitol construction force, being, as chief architect, in charge of the Capitol building and all improvements thereon, for nearly forty years. The "inaugural table" is now owned by Watson F. Clark, a Washington business man and son of Edward Clark, who, in line with the custom of his family for a half century, has tendered the table to the Harding inaugural committee, which, like many of its predecessors, has accepted it for use on March 4.

The early history of the table is unknown, but the tradition is that Edward Clark purchased it originally and loaned it from his home for service at the first Lincoln inauguration. Anyway, it has been in the Clark family since that time, and has been regularly loaned to inauguration committees every four years since 1861. There is a tradition that the table was first used at John Quincy Adams' inauguration in 1825 but the surviving head of the Clark family says that is not true. The only time since Lincoln's initiation to the Presidential office when it was not used was at the Taft inaugural in 1909. The exception was due to the weather on that occasion. The table was on hand, as usual, on the platform at the front of the Capitol where

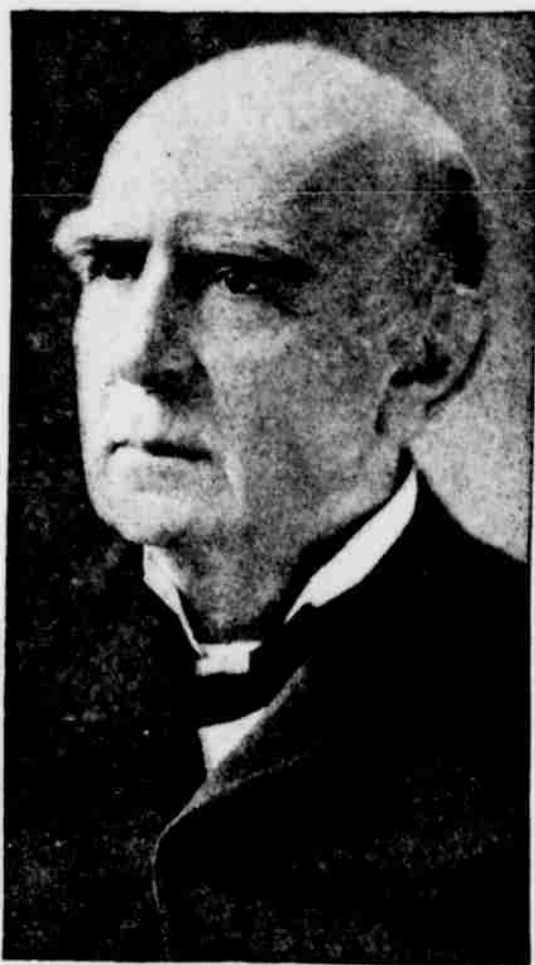
inaugural exercises generally take place. But the weather on March 4, 1909, was so terrific that the President was forced to take the oath and deliver his address in the Senate Chamber, and no one thought to take the historic table to him.

Attempts have been made several times by by-standers at inaugurals to steal the table, as a souvenir of the particular occasion, probably, for few have known of its long inaugural history. The most dramatic and nearest successful attempt at seizure was made during one of the Wilson inaugurations. In the confusion following the ceremonies the table disappeared. A Capitol policeman by chance saw a man passing through the rotunda inside the Capitol building with a table under his arm. He had the wit to stop the man and make inquiry, whereupon the souvenir "hound" dropped the article and passed on with the crowd.

At the Roosevelt inaugural in 1905 a small piece of the delicate beading around the top of the table was chipped off. The scar that was left indicated that a pocket knife had been used and some of the correspondents in writing of the incident intimated rather broadly that one of the members of the foreign diplomatic corps committed the sacrilege. Those who checked up on the incident are not sure, however, that the gash was made intentionally by anyone. The table may have been pushed over and the gash caused by the fall. It was repaired in the Capitol shops.

The table has a memento significance in addition to its part in Lincoln's two inaugurations and all but one of succeeding ones. It is a relic of one of the most distinguished men whose names are associated with the development of the United States Capitol building.

Edward Clark, who preserved the table and handed it down to his descendants, became chief architect of the Capitol in 1865, after several years' service under Thomas U. Walter who designed and directed the construction of the House and Senate wings of the building. Mr. Clark supervised most of the later work done on the famous structure, particularly the decorations, and also planned many newer government structures in Wash-



THE LATE EDWARD CLARK, who was chief architect of the United States Capitol. The tradition of his family is that Mr. Clark provided the little parlor table that served Lincoln in 1861.



Beside this table every President, except one, beginning with Abraham Lincoln in 1861, stood while being inducted or re-inducted into office. It will be used again at the inauguration of Warren G. Harding on March 4. The table belongs to Watson F. Clark, of Washington, D. C., in whose family it has been for more than a half century.

ington. He served as chief architect until his death in 1902, and became famous as an architect, litterateur and patron of music.

Mr. Clark was succeeded by Elliot Woods, who still holds the place. In fact, only three men have had charge of the United States Capitol since 1852.

"Haven't efforts been made by collectors to buy the famous inaugural table?" Watson F. Clark, its present owner, was asked.

"I can't recall a single serious offer for it," Mr. Clark replied. "The only one of any kind that I know of was made recently by a second-hand furniture dealer. He saw an item in one of the local Washington papers stating that the table would again be used at the Harding inauguration. He hurried around to the house, looked the table over very carefully, noted its good state of preservation and, appearing as if he thought it to be a piece of mere old furniture, asked: 'Do you want to sell it?'"

"We told him that it wasn't for sale, and it isn't, either as second-hand furniture, or as a memento or antique. It will continue to be available for service at Presidential inaugurations."

"What do you do with it between times?"

"We use it for a game of cards now and then, for example, but you may be sure we take mighty good care of it."

How Much Do You Owe?

ANY time figures get up into the millions the average man loses all sense of proportion. From then on, hundreds of millions, billions, are only rows of ciphers. But in the *Journal of Commerce* (New York) Frederic Austin published the first complete figures on international finance authoritatively compiled since the war. This is an attempted analysis of those figures in everyday terms.

For example, if we say the national debt of the United States was \$1,028,564,000 in 1913; \$17,005,431,000 in 1918 and \$24,974,936,000 in 1920 while it is obvious that it has increased some 24 times, it is difficult to bring it home to the individual. But, if we put it this way: the debt of each individual—each person's share of the national debt—in 1913 was \$11, and today each person's share of the debt is \$225, that makes it clear enough, for \$11 and \$225 are sums well within common experience.

If there are five persons in your family, including the baby, your share of that debt is \$225 times 5 or \$1,125. You can buy an automobile and a piano and have enough left over for spare tires and gasoline with \$1,125.

The total pre-war national debts of the world totaled \$43,200,931,000; by the armistice this was swelled to \$214,075,373,000; today the world owes \$265,305,022,000. Put it in words—two hundred and sixty-five billions of dollars; and each billion is one thousand millions. It is a lot of money!

There are countries that actually decreased their national debts during the war. The reason is obvious: they were neutrals or else so far removed that the demands on their resources were small and their commerce was not ravaged as was the case with the Scandinavian countries, for example. These countries with a decrease are:

Ceylon, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru and Venezuela.

The Dutch East Indies didn't owe a nickel in 1913, and now has a national debt of \$91,871,000; Panama,

which owed in 1913 only \$5,100, now has a debt of \$7,101,000.

But here is a peculiar thing. Among the major belligerents the increases are extremely heavy—except in Japan. In 1913 Japan owed \$1,241,997,000 and today her debt only amounts to \$1,300,000,000, comparatively speaking, a paltry increase.

Every other nation in the world, with Japan, has seen its debt increase, the United Kingdom's national debt, for example, has grown from \$3,485,818,000 to \$39,314,000,000; but this does not include the colonial debts. Canada's increase is from \$544,391,000 to \$1,935,946,000. Without going into details the total indebtedness of the British Empire in 1913 was \$8,121,932,000 while now it reaches \$48,045,148,000.

On the Entente side, France (if you consider the British Empire by states and not as a whole) led the world in debts with \$6,346,129,000, and now, irrespective of the French colonies, owes \$46,025,000,000, only a little less than Germany's \$48,552,000,000.

Now to put these figures in pocketbook terms, the French, with the heaviest per capita obligation in the world, owed, in 1913, \$160 for every individual in the republic; today each resident of France owes \$1,150; for a family of five persons this is \$5,750. Great Britain comes second now, although in 1913 she was third. The British personal obligation was \$78, now it is \$850. Germany, in 1913, was more happily placed than any other big power; her inhabitants owed only \$18 per individual; but today, exclusive of the debts of the individual states, each German is responsible for \$800.

From there, there is a big drop. Austria, whose per capita debt in 1913 was \$63, now has an individual burden of \$525, and Hungary, whose debt worked out

before the war at \$70 each, now is responsible for \$387.

Italy, whose personal indebtedness of \$78 ranked her second in 1913, now has dropped to sixth, although her per capita indebtedness today is \$365, but Australia's, whose per capita debt was no larger than Germany's \$18, has become \$318 for each Australian.

Then comes the United States which, despite its tremendous proportional increase, is far less heavy on the individual than in any other countries except Canada and Russia, and the last, of course, is doubtful. The United States per capita, as quoted above, is \$225 as against \$11 in 1913. Canada's in 1913 was \$70, and now is \$159. Russia's was \$27 and in 1917 was \$125.

Similar figures might be worked out for every nation in the world, but sufficient is indicated to show that the weight of affairs falls heavily on every living soul in the world; perhaps the most powerful argument showing the wrongness of international conduct ever produced. If proof of this statement is deemed insufficient, here are a few figures showing how the load has gradually increased with the wars of the last two centuries.

At the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 the national debts of the world amounted to \$1,500,000,000. China alone owes that much today. Eighty years later, on the eve of the Napoleonic Wars, the total had reached \$2,500,000,000. At the close of the Napoleonic Wars this was \$7,000,000,000. Thirty years later at the beginning of the Crimean War it was \$8,400,000,000, and in 1861, at the beginning of the United States Civil War, the world's indebtedness had reached \$13,400,000,000. The total had jumped to \$22,400,000,000 at the close of the Franco-Prussian War and in 1907, prior to the Spanish-American, Boer, Russo-Japanese, and Balkan wars it was \$30,200,000,000.

In 1914 it was \$44,100,000,000, and each year of the war sent the total mounting up; it was \$56,900,000,000 in 1915; \$120,485,000,000 in 1916; \$199,100,000,000 in 1917; \$225,300,000,000 in 1918; \$248,000,000,000 in 1919 and \$255,000,000,000 in 1920.